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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, April 12, 1929.

Not for publication.

Subject: "Homes for Birds." Program includes menu and recipe from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Homes for Birds."

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"Dear Aunt Sammy," writes a young correspondent, "Can you tell me where to get ideas for making bird houses? I have been studying about birds, and I want to make some houses this spring for the robins, wrens, orioles, and brown thrashers which spend the summer on our farm. Also, can you tell me whether there is any way to keep cats away from the birds?"

I am sending this youngster a copy of the bulletin called "Homes for Birds," which has pictures of several kinds of bird houses, with directions for making them. It also explains methods of attracting birds. There are plain, easy-to-make homes for the bluebird, who doesn't care whether his home is a fancy one or not. There are charming rustic homes, covered with bark, for the more particular birds, and a neat little bungalow for Jenny Wren.

For the purple martins, which love companionship, there are regular apartment houses. The martin house illustrated in the bird bulletin has a foundation, two stories, and a roof. There are eight rooms in each story. As the bird colony grows, more stories can be added.

How would you like to have an owl in your bird family? Barn owls like man-made homes. The simpler the home, the better pleased is the owl. No fancy gingerbread work and bric-a-brac for the wise old owl.

Let's see -- you asked me how cats may be kept away from the birds. Cats are one of the greatest obstacles in efforts to increase bird life in cities, and in suburban communities. Even the most well-mannered and kindly house cat is likely to fall from grace, when he sees young birds taking their first flights. During the nesting season, cats must be kept clear away from the neighborhood of the bird houses.

If the bird house is placed on a pole, or in a tree, cats can be kept away by the use of sheet-metal guards. Place the guard high enough on the tree that the cat cannot spring from the ground, and secure a hold above the sheet metal. There are a number of other devices for keeping cats and other enemies from bird houses. These devices are described in the bulletin I mentioned: "Homes for Birds."

Speaking of birds, did you read the story of the women who paid \$10 a pair for English sparrows? A number of passengers on a liner which docked

in New York last month bought some brilliant-colored love birds in Havana. During the voyage to New York, one of the women decided to give her birds a bath. As soon as they were dipped into the tub, the water turned a bright red, while the crests and breasts of the love birds changed from crimson to dull brown. The other women who had bought love birds in Havana gave their pets a bath -- only to find that they were all owners of English sparrows, for which they had paid \$10 a pair. Fine feathers make fine birds -- even out of English sparrows.

Here's a question to answer, before we get dinner. The question is from a man who wants me to suggest a climbing plant for his back porch -- something that will grow up in a hurry, and cover the south side of the back porch.

W. R. B., the garden adviser, suggests a number of climbing plants. He says Japanese morning glories are good -- not the common morning glory, which self-seeds, and becomes a weed, but the large flowered Japanese kind. Soak the seed over night in lukewarm water; then plant them in rich soil, where you want the plants to grow. Put up strings, or wire trellis, for them to climb upon, and you will get plenty of shade and lots of flowers.

Have you ever planted gourds? There's a wonderful variety of gourds to choose from. Uncle Ebenezer has planted gourds along the fence back of our garden. He bought a package of mixed gourd seed -- out of curiosity, I think. Gourds are very fine for covering a temporary arbor. Last year one of our neighbors shaded a sandpile with gourd vines. He put up four posts, with some crosspieces, stretched wire netting over them, and planted gourds. They shaded the sand pile, where the children played, and provided enough gourds to form an ornamental collection.

Have you ever heard of the Kudzu vine? W. R. B. told me about it. The Kudzu vine belongs to the bean family, is a perennial with large starchy roots, and makes a wonderful growth. Anyway, when once established, the Kudzu vine will often grow a foot or more over night; in fact, it will cover an arbor or a porch in ^{just} a few days. If the vines of the Kudzu are allowed to trail on the ground, they will root at the joints, and it may become a nuisance. W. R. B. says he wouldn't advise anyone to plant it on the poultry yard fence, because it makes such a heavy growth that it is likely to crush the fence to the ground. He tried it once, and had to build a new fence. However, it's excellent for covering an arbor, and for shading porches. It needs strong wires, or a framework, to support it. In the North, the tops of the Kudzu will winterkill but the roots will live if mulched with a few inches of straw and will send up new shoots in the Spring.

Well -- looks as if I've strayed from my subject, somewhat. It's time to broadcast a menu, anyway. Have a very nice one for you today. Ever make Clam Fritters? Then you don't know what you've been missing, all these years! There's nothing like a good Clam Clitter -- I mean a good Flam Flitter -- oh, I wish the Menu Specialist would call it something else! What I mean is, there's nothing like a good fritter, made of clams, to make husbands happy.

R-H.C. 4/12

Six ingredients for you-know-what:

1 pint shucked clams	2 teaspoons baking powder
2 eggs	1/2 teaspoon salt, and
1 cup sifted flour	1 table s poon melted butter

Six ingredients: (Repeat)

Drain the clams from the liquor, and take care to catch and save all of it. Grind the clams in the meat grinder, or chop them fine. Beat the eggs, add the sifted dry ingredients, clam liquor, melted butter, and the clams. Stir until well mixed. Heat some well-flavored fat in a skillet and when hot drop the batter by spoonfuls into the fat, allowing sufficient space between the fritters for them to spread and rise. Brown on both sides, drain on ^{absorbent} paper, and serve at once.

I became so engrossed in the clams, I almost forgot the rest of the dinner; Carrots in Parsley Butter; Cold Slaw; and Coffee Gelatin with Whipped Cream. Recipes for Carrots in Parsley Butter and Coffee Gelatin with Whipped Cream are in the Radio Cookbook.

Monday: "More about Cut Flowers for the Home."

